

In the Claims:

A. Kindly cancel non-elected Claim 20, without prejudice.

B. Kindly amend Claims 1, 3, 7, 12, 13, and 15, as follows. No new matter has been introduced.

1. **(Amended)** A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, having a nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack, comprising:

initiating formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack by:

depositing a first ultra-thin nitride film on a semiconductor substrate, wherein the

5 first ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;

depositing a high-k material on the first ultra-thin nitride film; and

depositing a second ultra-thin nitride film on the high-k material, thereby forming a sandwich structure, wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film is

10 deposited using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;

completing formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack from the sandwich structure; and

completing fabrication of the device.

3. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 1,

wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and

wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).

7. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 1,

wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and

wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).

12. **(Amended)** A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, having a nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack, comprising:

initiating formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack by:

depositing a first ultra-thin nitride film on a semiconductor substrate,

5 wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique, and

 wherein the substrate comprises a silicon wafer or a silicon-on-insulator (SOI) wafer;

depositing a high-k material on the first ultra-thin nitride film; and

10 depositing a second ultra-thin nitride film on the high-k material, thereby forming a sandwich structure, wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;

completing formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack from the sandwich structure; and

completing fabrication of the device.

13. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 12,

wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and

wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).

15. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 14,

wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and

wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).